

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:DKUX:EI

APPROVED BY OES/NET:MKRATZER

OES/NET/IM - MR. DEAN COOPER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL BOMBAY IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 177005

STADIS//////////

PASS TO BOMBAY FOR CONSUL GENERAL COURTNEY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: TARAPUR

REF: BOMBAY 1843

1. NOT CLEAR HERE ABOUT EARLIER REFERENCE. WHAT WE NEED NOW IS INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF FUEL UTILIZATION AT HYDERABAD. AS INDICATED IN STATE 175930, KRATZER BELIEVES THAT QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE "URGENCY" OF FUEL IN 845 ARE LIKELY TO ARISE DURING JULY 20 HEARING. WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER THESE AS FULLY, PROMPTLY AND ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE. WE WOULD WANT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES TO BE ABLE TO USE PUBLICLY THE INFORMATION WE RECEIVE IF THIS PROBLEM COMES UP IN THE HEARINGS. IT WOULD BE USEFUL THAT WE RECEIVE THE INDIAN AEC RESPONSE BEFORE THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS WASHINGTON TIME JULY 19 SO WE CAN CLARIFY BY TELEPHONE ANY

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POINTS OF MISUNDERSTANDING.

2. WE HAVE NO TROUBLE WITH YOUR ACCEPTING SETHNA INVITATION TO VISIT INDIAN FACILITIES. IF WE HAVE SOME SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, WE WILL CABLE YOU NEXT WEEK.

3. WE ARE A LITTLE CONCERNED THAT SETHNA IS UNDERESTIMATING

THE PROBLEMS THAT LIE AHEAD ON 845. WE GOT BY ON 805 ONLY ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE MAJOR ISSUES WOULD BE FACED WHEN 845 CAME BEFORE THE NRC. WE ARE NOW AT THAT POINT. OPPONENTS HAVE ASSEMBLED AN EXTENSIVE ARRAY OF TESTIMONY DEALING NOT ONLY WITH RELATIVE SIDE ISSUES SUCH AS HEALTH HAZARDS TO SIERRA CLUB MEMBERS, BUT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM: WHETHER IT IS GOOD POLICY FOR THE US TO CONTINUE SHIPMENTS TO TARAPUR IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT INDIA HAS EXPLODED A NUCLEAR DEVICE. WE ARGUE STRONGLY THAT IT IS BUT THERE ARE MANY, INCLUDING FORMER UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE GEORGE BALL WHO ARGUE WE SHOULD NOT DO SO. A COMMON THREAD OF STATEMENTS BY OPPONENTS, IN ADDITION TO URGING THE BUYBACK OPTION, IS THAT U.S. IS UNDERCUTTING NON-PROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES BY EXPORTING TO A NON-NPT COUNTRY SUCH AS INDIA UNLESS THAT COUNTRY ACCEPTS INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS ON ALL NUCLEAR FACILITIES.

4. IN SHORT, WE DON'T WANT TO POUR COLD WATER ON SETHNA'S ENTHUSIASM BUT WE THINK IT IS UNREALISTIC TO TALK ABOUT EXPANDED COOPERATION AT THIS JUNCTURE. AS AMBASSADOR HAS INDICATED TO CHAVAN, WE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH THE INDIANS VERY SHORTLY WITH RELATION TO THE BUYBACK QUESTION AND OTHER MATTERS THAT WE THINK MAY NEED TO BE CLEARED UP BEFORE WE WILL GET THE GREEN LIGHT ON 845.

5. WE CALLED IN INDIAN DCM VENKATESWARAN AND SCIENCE COUNSELOR KRISHNAN JULY 15 FOR PRE-HEARING RUNTHROUGH, GIVING THEM COPY OF OUR WRITTEN STATEMENT AS WELL AS OUR THOUGHTS ON POINTS OPPONENTS MIGHT MAKE. KRATZER ALSO MENTIONED THAT CIRUS HEAVY WATER PROBLEM COULD STILL CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR US AND INDICATED THAT WE MIGHT WANT TO EXPLORE WAYS FOR RETURN OF THIS HEAVY WATER TO U.S., IN ADDITION TO DISCUSSING BUYBACK OPTIONS WITH INDIANS AFTER

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COMPLETION OF PUBLIC HEARINGS. KRATZER NOTED THAT GOI SHOULD NOT EXPECT ACTION BY NRC UNTIL THE BUYBACK QUESTION IS CLARIFIED.

6. INDIANS HAVE ARRANGED FOR AIR SHIPMENT OF 805 AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT ENTIRE AMOUNT WAS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE U.S. JULY 15. HABIB

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